

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 AID-05 CIEP-01 OMB-01

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R 311435Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8912

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN, PGOV, EG

SUBJECT: PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY ACTS ON 1976 PLAN/BUDGET

REF: CAIRO 13136

1. AFTER TWO WEEKS OF DEBATE, PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY DEC. 30 PUT ITS STAMP OF AGREEMENT ON GOE 1976 DEVELOPMENT PLAN, WITH RELATIVELY INNOCUOUS OPERATIVE AMENDMENTS, BY APPROVING LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE'S REPORT, AND IS EXPECTED TO APPROVE, ON SCHEDULE, FORTHCOMING YEAR'S BUDGET TODAY (DEC. 31). NO RPT NO ENTIRELY CREDIBLE FIGURES ON SIZE OF BUDGET HAVE EMERGED FROM DEBATE IN ASSEMBLY, BUT ONE ESTIMATES WE HAVE SEEN IN PRESS IS TOTAL OF LE 5,972 MILLION (WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY IS GROSS AGGREGATE FIGURE). BUDGETED INVESTMENTS REPORTEDLY WILL AMOUNT TO LE 1,350 MILLION, 90 PERCENT OF WHICH IS SLATED FOR PUBLIC SECTOR.

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ASSEMBLY, BY APPROVING BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT, ALSO HAS

TAKEN POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT STEP OF RECOMMENDING REDUCTION OF GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES ON SOME BASIC COMMODITIES (SEPTTEL FOLLOWS). FINAL MOVE IN FORMAL BUDGET PROCEDURE WILL BE PROMULGATION OF DOCUMENT BY PRESIDENT DECREE.

2. ASSEMBLY SESSION OF DEC. 30 WAS MARKED, IN FASHION SEEMINGLY BECOMING ROUTINE, BY HEATED DEBATE AND EXCHANGE OF EIPHTHETS. ISSUE IN QUESTION WAS SUGGESTED TRIAL OF FORMER PLANNING MINISTERS (REFTEL WHICH WAS LABELED AS LIBEL BY ONE OF THOSE CONCERNED, ISMAIL SABRI ABDELLAH, REPLACED IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR. IN AN ARTICLE IN AHRAH, ABDELLAH STATED HIS READINESS TO STAND PUBLIC TRIAL, BUT WARNED HE WOULD TAKE LEGAL ACTION AGAINST HIS ACCUSER, ASSEMBLYMEN MAHMOUD ABU WAFIA, SADAT'S BROTHER-IN-LAW. LATTER ACCUSED ISMAIL OF THREATS AND BLACKMAIL AND OFFERED TO WAIVE HIS IMMUNITY TO PROSECUTION. SPEAKER MAREL, WHO POINTED OUT THAT IMMUNITY CANNOT BE WAIVED UNLESS ASSEMBLY APPROVES, APPARENTLY WAS ABLE TO CALM MATTERS, ALTHOUGH TODAY'S SESSION, HEARD IN BACKGROUND BY EMBOFF IN TELEPHONE CALL TO DEPUTY SPEAKER'S OFFICE, SEEMS QUITE LIVELY.

3. COMMENT: THIS HAS BEEN A STORMY SESSION, THUS FAR, PARTLY BECAUSE MAJOR ISSUES OF BROAD INTEREST WERE UNDER CONSIDERATION, I.E. ECONOMIC PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR. ASSEMBLY WILL NOW TURN TO ITEMS OF SOMEWHAT NARROWER BUT STILL QUITE IMPORTANT SUBJECTS - TAX REFORM, PROPERTY OWNERSHIP, EMPLOYMENT LAWS, ETC. ON WHICH VIEWS ARE BOTH QUITE DIVERGENT AND QUITE STRONGLY HELD. WITH EXPERIENCE THEY HAVE GAINED DURING PAST YEAR, WE CAN EXPECT ASSEMBLY MEMBERS TO BE FAIRLY RAMBUNCTIOUS IN COMING MONTHS AS WELL. EILTS

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